

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5859

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MASS, KS, US

SUBJECT: EDITORIAL REACTION TO PRESS REPORTS ON U.S.

FORCES AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE

1. EDITORIAL COMMENT IN LEADING SEOUL DAILIES HAS HEAVILY CRITICIZED REPORTED PENTAGON PLANS FOR TRANSFORMING AMERICAN FORCES IN KOREA INTO REGIONAL RESERVE FORCE AND MOVING TROOPS SOUTH OF SEOUL, DESPITE BRIEF PRESS REPORTS THAT PENTAGON SOURCES HAVE DENIED SUCH PLANS. SAME EDITORIALS ALSO ATTACK SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO PHASE DOWN MILITARY AID TO ROK.

2. GENERAL PRESS VUEW IS THAT FLURRY OF PRESS STORIES ON ABOVE SUBJECTS, INDICATING POSSIBLE LESSENING U.S. SUPPORT, CREATES ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY. SUCH MOVES COMBINED UNDERCUT ROK SECURITY AND LEAD NORTH KOREA TO DANGEROUS MISREADING U.S. INTENTIONS IN KOREA.

3. HANKUK ILBO SEES PENTAGON PLAN AS SIGNIFYING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN ROLE OF U. . FORCES IN KOREA, THINNING OF U.S. COMMITMENT, AND PRELIMINARY STEP TOWARD U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL. ACCORDING HANKUK, UNCLASSIFIED

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SUCH CHANGE SHOULD ONLY COME AFTER FULL CONSULTATION

AND OTHER STEPS TO COMPENSATE ROK WEAKNESSES.

4. COMMENTING ON SENATE MOVE, LEADING DONGA ILBO
HITS KEY THEME, ARGUING AGAINST USE OF AID AS
LEVERAGE ON KOREAN DOMESTIC SITUATION.

5. MASS CIRCULATION JOONGANG ILBO INTERPRETS STORIES
AS INDICATING CLOSE US/ROK TIES FACING CRUCIAL TEST
THESE DAYS. JOONGANG MAKES POINT THAT STRAIN IN U.S.
RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE IF IT
CAME ON TOP OF CURRENT ROK-JAPAN TROUBLES. JOONGANG
PICTURES U.S. AS MID WIFE FOR FOUNDING OF SOUTH KOREA
AND AS BEARING CONTINUING SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY.
ERICSON

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